



# *The HPD News*

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## Department Drying Out From Allison's Fury

Two months after Tropical Storm Allison paralyzed the city, the Houston Police Department has shown tremendous success in its resiliency despite some of the setbacks it experienced during one of the worst natural disasters this area has ever experienced.

Heavy rains fell on the city on Friday, June 8, 2001. By Saturday morning, the basement at 61 Riesner was flooded knocking out power, computers, radio communications, and telephones. Emergency Communications personnel were moved to the Command Center at 1200 Travis. Dispatchers manually wrote down calls for service and pinpointed locations on Key Maps since the computers were inoperable. "This is the first time in the history of HPD where the Emergency Communications Division had to abandon its site," said Captain D.W. Ready (Emergency Communications).

Central Patrol officers converted the nearby Pig Stand Restaurant at Washington and Sawyer into a makeshift command post. Telephone service was also disabled at HPD buildings at 1400 Lubbock, 1300 Dart, 1202 Washington, 1301 Goliad, and 33 Artesian.

HPD personnel returned to 61 Riesner by 3 a.m. Monday, June 11. Damage estimates to desktop, laptop, and MDT (Mobile Digital Terminal) computers throughout the department exceeded \$600,000. Nearly 200 HPD vehicles were damaged. Despite the high number, only 33 vehicles were declared as total losses.

Flood damage throughout the department varied. Small lakes formed in streets surrounding some of the police stations making it difficult for some officers to get home or for relief officers to reach the stations. As a result, some officers worked several hours beyond their shift.

## Officers Victimized By Tropical Storm Allison

All HPD Officers Earnest and Yolanda West want this Christmas is to be sleeping in their own bed. Today, the Wests and their 21-month-old son, Braylan, are living in a mobile trailer parked in front of their flood damaged home. The two officers are among the few dozen officers and civilians who suffered extensive damage to their homes.

The Wests count their blessings because they are alive, they are getting assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and countless fellow officers have come to their aid. But that does not stop the sadness over losing a dream house they had just remodeled. The nightmare began about midnight when Earnest (Central Patrol) returned home. "As I drove through the neighborhood, it was very dark, the rain was coming down in buckets, and water was rising and filling the ditches in front of our house," said Earnest. He went inside and urged Yolanda (Special Operations) to pack some bags and prepare to evacuate. After gathering food and some other possessions, Earnest looked out his back window. "I saw our picnic table floating in the backyard and just couldn't believe my eyes," Earnest said. Nervously, he checked the front yard and saw the water had risen to the door. Yolanda grabbed the baby and headed to the attic over the carport. As the couple and Earnest's parents crammed into the attic, they could only pray and wait for the rain to stop. The family spent 12 hours in the attic before being rescued by boat about 1 p.m.



**Citizens walk by the flooded Houston Police Memorial Monument. Mud formed on the granite structure but there was no damage to the foundation.**

## Chief's Column

Employees of the Houston Police Department are a special breed. Whether you are classified or a civilian, you probably joined the department because you wanted to be of service to other people. However, some HPD employees go 'above and beyond' their regular departmental duties to participate in assignments that are not part of their everyday routine.

The **HPD Honor Guard** is a volunteer assignment that garners great respect whenever its members participate in a function or event. You may have seen the Honor Guard proudly carrying the United States and Texas flags at an awards ceremony or in a parade. The Honor Guard also has the duty of paying the department's final respects at officers' funerals.

The **Peacemakers**, a gospel quartet, serve as volunteer 'good-

will ambassadors' for the department when they sing at public events like Houston Astros baseball games or at school or church functions. The Peacemakers also sing at officers' funerals and each year at the memorial service held during National Police Week.

The newly formed **HPD Bagpipe Band** is a volunteer assignment that is available to officers and civilian employees. Band members buy their own bagpipes and practice every Tuesday night at the L.D. Morrison Police Training Academy.

The **Dive Team** was instrumental in saving numerous lives during Tropical Storm Allison by conducting 'high water' rescues in flooded neighborhoods throughout the city. Dive Team officers undergo rigorous training and perform a valuable service to the department by assisting in finding evidence in criminal investigations, recovering submerged vehicles in bayous, or searching for

drowning victims in rivers or lakes. Dive Team officers can be called out at any hour of the day or night and many times must carry out their duties in extremely hazardous conditions.

Whenever a hostage situation arises, the **Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT)** works in conjunction with the SWAT Detail to bring the situation to a peaceful resolution.

The **Special Response Group (SRG)** is comprised of officers trained to respond to situations involving large crowds or whenever extra manpower is needed to handle an incident.

The officers and civilians in these programs and others have a passion to go 'above and beyond' their regular assignments. They are to be commended for their dedication to HPD and the citizens of Houston.



## Running A Red Light Is Dead Wrong

For most of us, stopping at a red light is something we learned in school. Unfortunately, many of us today think that saving a little time is worth a lot of risk. When was the last time you accelerated through a yellow light? Have you ever approached a red light, decided it "looked safe" and continued through the intersection?

The result can be deadly with shattered vehicles and shattered lives. Worse yet, the problem is growing. Nearly every hour, someone dies needlessly in an intersection crash. More than one million motor vehicle collisions occur each year at traffic signals throughout the United States, resulting in more than 500,000 injuries and more than one thousand deaths.

While nearly all drivers are concerned about this form of aggressive driving, 56 percent of Americans admit to running red lights. Most red light runners admit to being prompted by nothing more than being in a hurry.

As police department employees, let us set the example for everyone else by obeying all traffic laws, and especially not running red lights. Don't forget: "The Light Is Red For A Reason. So Stop."

## Annual Luncheon Honors Houston Grandparents



Houston Police Chief C.O. Bradford will host the tenth annual Grandparents' Luncheon on Friday, September 7, 2001, at 11:30 a.m. at the Fu Kim Restaurant at 2615 Fannin. Organizers expect over 700 grandparents to attend this year's event.

Invited guests will enjoy a ca-

tered lunch by Fu Kim Restaurant. There will also be door prizes for everyone including commemorative mugs from this year's luncheon. This year's Grandparents' Luncheon will honor speakers from previous luncheons including Tom McQuade, the son of Marian McQuade who founded the National Grandparents' Day observance; Reverend Bill Lawson; and Ray Miller.

The annual Grandparents' Luncheon recognizes grandparents who have been placed in a parenting role and the importance that all grandparents play in raising children in today's society. "Many grandparents have taken on the additional responsibility of raising their grandchildren because of various circumstances that have removed the

parents from that role," said Chief Bradford. "These grandparents are to be commended for taking on that role, especially at a time when they should be enjoying their retirement," said the Chief.

Sponsors of this year's Grandparents' Luncheon are Fu Kim Restaurant and Duke Energy. The Grandparents' Luncheon is coordinated by the Houston Police Department's Community Outreach Division.



## Back To School Safety Tips For HPD Parents and Children

School will soon be back in session for many young people throughout Houston. If you have children or live in a neighborhood with a large number of youngsters, remind them of these safety rules as they go to and from school.

- Never accept a ride or gifts from someone they or you (their parent or guardian) do not know.
- Never walk or play by yourself. Stay with your friends. Stay away from vacant buildings and alleys. Stay away from strangers near playgrounds, public restrooms, and schools.
- Take a safe route to and from school. As a parent, walk the route with your child and find places where they can get help, if needed, like P.A.N.D.A. Safehouses.
- If something does not seem right, tell a police officer, a teacher, or a neighbor.
- Never let a stranger in the house. If you answer the phone, do not let that person know that an adult is not at home or that you are by yourself.
- If you come home before your parents or guardian, call them to let them know you arrived safely. If there is a problem and you do not feel like something is right, call the police.

The Houston Police Department offers safety seminars for school age children. To schedule a seminar, have your child's school administrator call the Community Services Division at 713-308-3200. For more information about crime prevention programs offered by HPD, visit [www.houstonpolicedepartment.com](http://www.houstonpolicedepartment.com).



## Our Place in History: The L.D. Morrison Museum



**Officer Denny Hair shows the engraved revolver that belonged to former Chief of Police L.D. Morrison, whose portrait is in the background.**

The Houston Police Department Museum at the L.D. Morrison Police Training Academy began with a box of rare, unmarked, uncategorized items and a police officer with a passion for law enforcement history.

Officer Denny Hair (Academy) received the box 20 years ago and was entrusted to create the HPD Museum with it. Everything else he would have to obtain himself. It was quite a challenge for Officer Hair, who describes himself as a collector and historian. Officer Hair had some experience working an extra-employment job at a museum but he had no experience writing grant proposals or soliciting funds to launch the museum. He was his own clerk and typist. With the help of citizen volunteers, Officer Hair was able to log the donations, archive the photographs, and research the history of each item going on display at the museum.

Today, the museum displays rare items dating back to the 1840s when the Houston Police Department was first established. You can see a wide array of items at the museum including a police helicopter suspended from the ceiling, rare firearms, and a recreation of an old dispatch office for radio patrols. Children get a thrill when they experience riding in a police car simulator

complete with lights flashing and sirens wailing. The value of the museum's collection is about one million dollars.

Approximately 200,000 people visit the museum annually. School field trips are encouraged. The museum is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Officer Hair gives personally guided tours Tuesdays and Thursdays, if you make a reservation. Call Officer Hair at 281-230-2361 to take your tour of the Houston Police Department Museum located at 17000 Aldine-Westfield Road at the L.D. Morrison Police Training Academy.

### Learning Resource Center Promotes Continuing Education

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) is located in the Academic Building at the L.D. Morrison Police Training Academy (17000 Aldine-Westfield Road). It is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Some of the resources available at the LRC include books, videotapes, and audiotapes. The LRC also offers Internet access research capability, desk top computer access, extensive criminal justice holdings, CD-ROM disc training, reference material from state and federal agencies, and a wide range of periodicals from law enforcement agencies around the nation. If you have any questions about the LRC, call Ms. Sally Brumley at (281) 230-2372.